

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ANTANA 01302 122244Z
ACTION AF-04

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANTANANARIVO 1302

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, MA, US

SUBJ: NORMALIZING RELATIONS WITH MADAGASCAR

REF: A) STATE 152709; B) ANT 1289 AND PREVIOUS
C) ANT 1141 AND ANT 1149

1. I HOPE IT WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED BELABORING THE OBVIOUS FOR ME TO SUGGEST THAT WE LET SOME TIME PASS AFTER RATSIRAKA'S TRIP TO THE SOVIET UNION BEFORE WE MAKE ANY CHANGES IN OUR POSITION TOWARD MADAGASCAR. TO APPOINT AN AMBASSADOR ANY TIME SOON WOULD, IN MY VIEW, LOOK LIKE A SOMEWHAT OVERLY ANXIOUS REACTION TO THE SOVIET TRIP, AND AN AMBASSADOR COMING UNDER THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD BE STARTING HIS MISSION HERE UNDER A CLOUD. SIMILARLY, EITHER OF THE OTHER TWO APPROACHES SUGGESTED BY REF A COULD BE SEEN BY RATSIRAKA IN THE SAME LIGHT AND WOULD HARDLY IMPROVE OUR STANDING IN HIS EYES.

2. AFTER AN APPROPRIATE PERIOD OF TIME HAS PASSED WE MAY BETTER BE ABLE TO ASSESS THE RESULTS OF THE TRIP TO THE USSR AND DETERMINE THE BEST WAY TO ADJUST OUR POSITION IF THE DEPARTMENT STILL CONSIDERS IT ADVISABLE. I CAN FORESEE TWO GENERAL SCENARIOS: A) IT BECOMES EVIDENT THAT MADAGASCAR'S SOVIET RELATIONS HAVE NOT BASICALLY CHANGED. IN THIS CASE THE MERE PASSAGE OF TIME-SEVERAL MONTHS-WOULD BE ENOUGH TO RENDER

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ANY INITIATIVE ON OUR PART LESS LIKELY TO BE INTERPRETED AS A MERE REACTION TO THE SOVIET TRIP; B) IT TURNS OUT THAT DRM HAS DRAWN CONSIDERABLY CLOSER TO THE USSR, NOTABLY IN THE MILITARY FIELD. IN THIS CASE I WOULD RECOMMEND THAT WE AWAIT AND/OR ENCOURAGE SOME BALANCING GESTURE ON THE PART OF THE DRM, OR AT LEAST THE APPEARANCE THEREOF, BEFORE NAMING AN AMBASSADOR OR TAKING ANY OTHER SIGNIFICANT INITIATIVES TOWARD NORMALIZATION.

THE PURCHASE OF LOCKHEED AIRCRAFT FOR THE MALAGASY ARMED FORCES
COULD REPRESENT SUCH A GESTURE. WE COULD ALSO PRESENT N-243,
INVESTMENT AND B-747 PURCHASE AS FURTHER EVIDENCE, FOR PUBLIC
CONSUMPTION, THAT DRM FOREIGN POLICY REMAINS REASONABLY BALANCED
AND THEREFORE JUSTIFIES A FORTHCOMING U.S. GESTURE.

3. I WOULD STILL PREFER NOT TO MAKE ANY BASIC CHANGE IN THE U.S.
POSITION UNTIL WE HAVE PROPOSED PL 480 TITLE I RICE SALES (IN
FY 79) AND PRESENTED THE LIST SPECIFYING WHAT NASA SCIENTIFIC
EQUIPMENT WILL REVERT TO MADAGASCAR IN CASE OF A SETTLEMENT.
I CONTINUE TO HAVE HOPE THAT THESE TWO ACTIONS MAY START A PROCESS
OF NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH MADAGASCAR, BASED ON MUTUAL
GIVE AND TAKE, AND NOT UNILATERAL AMERICAN CONCESSIONS.
BARRETT

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